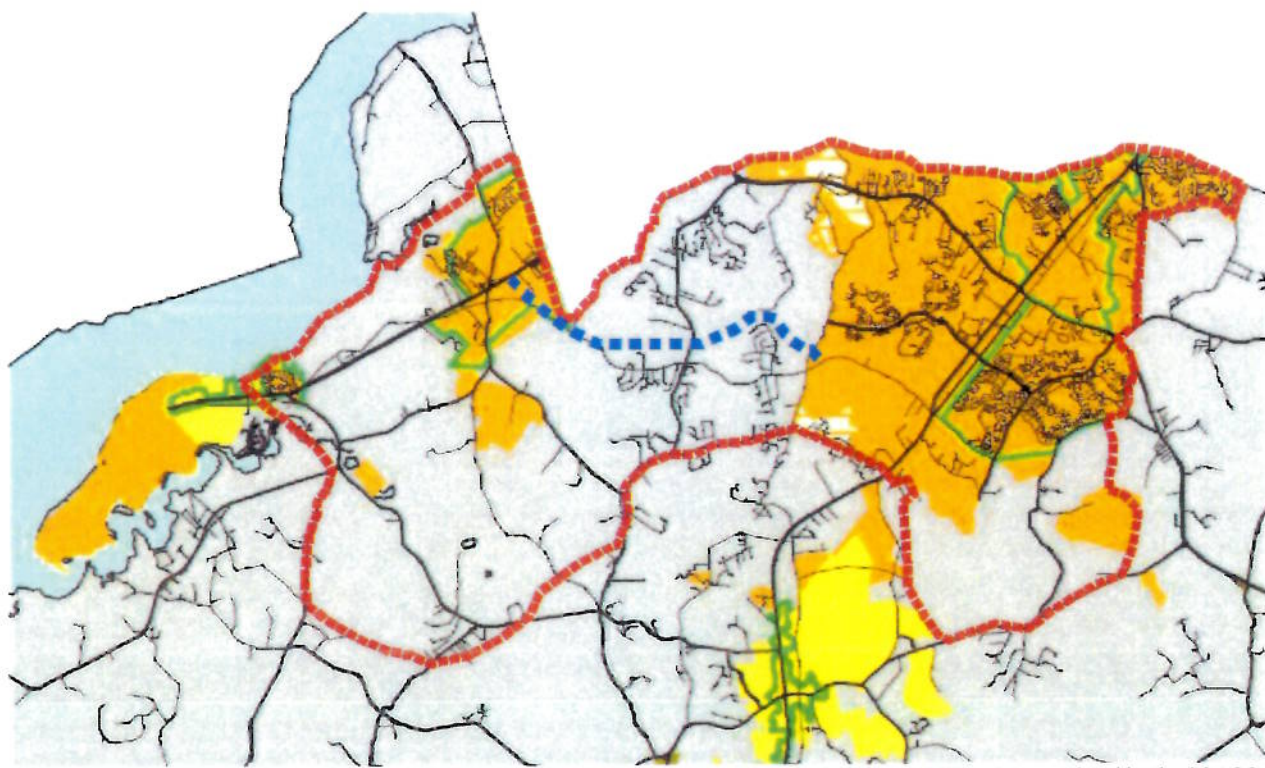


from recovering its investment in that facility. And when coupled with investment in pocket parks, greenways, and other public amenities, development in these areas can raise the quality of life for all. **Aligning the county's growth area with its Priority Funding Areas is a win for the county's residents, ecology, and economy.**

Figure 1. Charles County's Development District (red line) is much larger than the Priority Funding Areas (orange/yellow areas). The proposed CCC alignment is shown in blue.

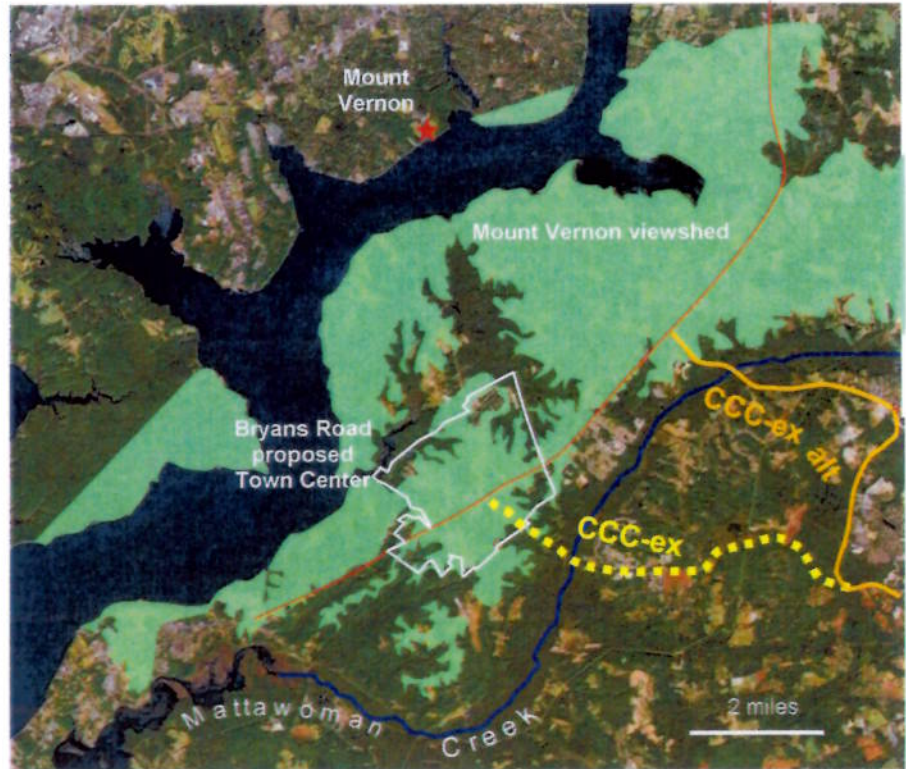


Development District and CCC-ex alignment superimposed upon MDP's PFA map for Charles County, MD. Map produced by the SGACC.

Just as smart growth means concentrating growth in suitable areas, it also means steering growth away from the most environmentally sensitive lands. One of the central recommendations of the Army Corps' *Mattawoman Creek Watershed Management Plan* is just this sort of protection. The plan recommends protecting Mattawoman's "stream valley", the land extending from the creek and its tributaries to the top of the adjoining slope. The Corps found that removing the stream valley from the development district was the most effective single action that could be taken to reduce excessive discharges to Mattawoman Creek.²⁵ Despite the recommendation from the Corps in 2003 and the completion of stream valley mapping by MD-DNR two years ago, little action has been taken to shield this critically important area from development impacts. The entire stream valley should be provided with meaningful protections, including open space zoning, property acquisition, and resource protection overlays to the top of the slope.



A successful smart growth strategy in Charles County must address local conditions while improving regional growth patterns. Historically, western Charles County has exemplified the county's rural character, a highly desirable attribute to the area. The Bryans Road community in particular is characterized by steep slopes that drain to sensitive fish spawning habitat and one of the state's premier sites for reptile and amphibian diversity. The area hosts an especially high quality Mattawoman tributary and a globally rare Magnolia Bog. A majority of Bryans



Excessive development in Bryans Road would permanently alter Mount Vernon's historic views of the Potomac River's eastern shore

Road is part of the historic Mount Vernon viewshed, groundwater issues have been identified as a serious problem in the area, and the encroachment of population and congestion could threaten the viability of the Naval facility in Indian Head (the County's largest employer). Because many of these issues were not adequately addressed in the Bryans Road-Indian Head sub-area plan, a re-evaluation is needed that addresses encroachment on the Naval Surface Warfare Center, protection of the Mount Vernon viewshed, and respect for the sensitive ecology and rural character of the area. It appears that planned growth could be moderated in Bryans Road without forcing development into rural areas, given the surplus development capacity in the County's PFAs. While some development can occur in the Bryans Road PFA, concern for these issues dictates that the CCC be removed as a requirement for realizing growth goals in Bryans Road.



3. BUILD GREEN

- Cluster new development and raise the standard for new roads to protect water quality
- Install effective stormwater controls to clean up runoff from existing development

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

Though highly ranked for its fisheries and habitats, the Maryland Department of the Environment has already identified Mattawoman Creek as “impaired” due to excess nutrient and sediment pollution. Extensive conversion of forests to developed land across the Mattawoman Creek watershed would undoubtedly worsen water quality that already fails to



Clear water from a forested tributary meets the main stem of Mattawoman Creek, muddied after a heavy rainstorm.

meet federal and state standards. Pollution limits set for Mattawoman Creek prescribe a 40% reduction in non-point source nutrient pollution²⁶, but scientific modeling conducted as part of the Corps’ Watershed Management Plan show that increases in nutrient pollution of up to 50% can be expected under current land use policies.²⁷

In addition to the threat of new development, many local waterways that feed into the Mattawoman suffer from inadequate past construction practices. In fact, the Army Corps of Engineers has flagged the lack of good stormwater management controls in parts of the Mattawoman watershed as one of the biggest challenges to improved water quality.²⁸

A BETTER WAY

Limiting the majority of development to the County’s Priority Funding Areas will help, but some development will inevitably occur beyond these smart-growth districts. Here, maintaining natural open spaces is a no-cost way to improve water quality and quality of life. State-of-the-art

site design standards, including mandatory clustering of houses in new subdivisions, are essential components of a growth strategy that can truly protect Charles County’s unique and defining natural resources. Some Maryland counties, such as Queen Anne’s and Kent, mandate that new development be clustered on 10 to 15 percent of a property, permanently preserving 85 to 90 percent of the land in forest and agricultural use.²⁹ Given the potential magnitude of the risks to Mattawoman Creek posed by sprawl development, similar protection should be applied to all development that occurs beyond Charles County’s Priority Funding Areas.

In the areas where building does occur, new streets will be needed whether or not the CCC is constructed. It has been represented that a network of local streets outside the PFAs would not



offer the same environmental protection as the CCC, but that need not be the case. If this is indeed so, it may be that the County's current road construction standards do not adequately protect local waterways. The County should update its road design standards to ensure the best, low impact street designs for stormwater management are in place. Montgomery County recently "greened" its own road design standards, and the new standards in place there might serve as a model for Charles County.



Stream bank erosion is often a sign of inadequate stormwater management practices on nearby developed lands.

Stormwater retrofit projects have been identified as a high priority for the Mattawoman Creek watershed. While not inexpensive, these activities could be funded by revenues from impact fees on new development, a stormwater utility district, general fund appropriations, and state and federal sources. In addition, improved stormwater designs could be required as part of redevelopment projects. Action by the County to increase dedicated funding for stormwater retrofitting is needed now regardless of the rate and pattern of new development in the watershed.



A CALL TO ACTION

The potential harmful impacts of the Cross-County Connector and the sprawl development it would support are truly exceptional. This threat is the reason Mattawoman Creek was recently placed on American Rivers' list of the 10 most endangered waterways in the nation. It is also the reason that the Mattawoman watershed stands as one of the Greater Washington region's top conservation priorities, as recognized by the Washington Smart Growth Alliance of business, development, civic, and environmental organizations. If the CCC were to be built, the magnitude of development, the degree of forest loss, the projected impacts on what is now a special, though impaired, waterbody would be almost unrivaled in the region. These impacts surely equal or exceed the threats to our communities posed by Blackwater Resort in Dorchester County, Four Seasons in Queen Anne's, and Terrapin Run in Allegany. All of these projects have spurred preventive or corrective action by the state, and the Mattawoman Creek watershed warrants nothing less.

The SGACC believes that the Cross County Connector is neither appropriate nor justifiable in light of the serious threats posed by the road and the sound alternatives available to the County. Fortunately, the prosperity, equal opportunity, and a high quality of life envisioned by Charles County do not depend on projects like the Cross-County Connector. In fact, the County is more likely to achieve these goals *without* the proposed highway conceived years before more contemporary growth management practices became the standard.



Sportsmen seek Mattawoman's bounty as the colors of autumn provide a scenic backdrop to the world-class fishery

Charles County has an infrastructure system already in place that other jurisdictions do not and boasts natural resources of national stature. The County should realize its potential for achieving economic and development goals while protecting Mattawoman Creek. Smart and sustainable development patterns offering a wide range of transportation choices, in close proximity to a protected and well-managed world-class eco-system, would not only generate

substantial economic activity but would make Charles County the envy of the region. The residents of Charles County, the citizens of the state, and the inhabitants of Mattawoman Creek watershed deserve nothing less.



End Notes

- ¹ Maryland Department of the Environment. *Annual Report* (2000).
- ² U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Public notice for public hearing of July 31, 2008. Note: included in the figure is 0.42 acres of isolated wetlands regulated by the Maryland Department of the Environment.
- ³ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District. *Mattawoman Creek Watershed Management Plan* (2003).
- ⁴ Beall, Melvin, Director, Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management. Letter to Paul Wettlaufer, ACOE (6/6/2008), 46.
- ⁵ Noland, R. and Cowart, W., "Analysis of Metropolitan Highway Capacity and the Growth in Vehicle Miles of Travel," *Transportation* 27(4): 363-390 (2000).
- ⁶ Fulton, L. et al., "A Statistical Analysis of Induced Travel Effects in the U.S. Mid-Atlantic Region," *Journal of Transportation and Statistics*, 3(1): 1-14 (2000).
- ⁷ Goodwin, P., "Empirical Evidence on Induced Traffic," *Transportation*, 23(1): 35-54 (February 1996).
- ⁸ Hansen, M and Huang, Y., "Road Supply and Traffic in California Urban Areas," *Transportation Research A*, 31: 205-218 (1997).
- ⁹ Cervero, R., "Road Expansion, Urban Growth, and Induced Travel: A Path Analysis," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 69(2): 145-163 (2003).
- ¹⁰ Ewing, R., et al., *Growing Cooler: the evidence on urban development and climate change*. Urban Land Institute: Washington, D.C. (2008), 105.
- ¹¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. *Our Built and Natural Environments: A Technical Review of the Interactions Between Land Use, Transportation, and Environmental Quality*, Report 231-R-01-002 (2001).
- ¹² Federal Highway Administration and Maryland Department of Transportation. Inter-county Connector FEIS, Response to Comments #1549, Appendix R-8 at p. 130 of 184; see also Comments of Walter Scott, ICC FEIS Public Comments, March 20, 2006 at p. 18 of 24.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education. "Maryland Smart Growth Indicators," Online at <http://www.indicatorproject.com>.
- ¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, *2007 American Community Survey*. Online at <http://www.census.gov>.
- ¹⁶ Greenwell, M. & Goodman, C. "O'Malley's Support for Rail In S.Md. Is Seen as a Boost" *Washington Post*, SM02 (1/29/2009).



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- ¹⁷ Neily, G. "Transportation Analysis: MD 32 Draft Environmental Impact Statement and State Highway Administration MD 32 Safety Action Plan: an assessment of transportation alternatives for MD 32 from MD 108 to Interstate 70," Baltimore Regional Partnership, (05/12/1999).
- ¹⁸ County Commissioners of Charles County, *Charles County Comprehensive Plan* (2006), 3-21.
- ¹⁹ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District. *Mattawoman Creek Watershed Management Plan* (2003), 22.
- ²⁰ Beall, Melvin. Letter to Paul Wettlaufer, ACOE (6/6/2008).
- ²¹ Center for Watershed Protection. *Impacts of Impervious Cover on Aquatic Systems* (2003).
- ²² Maryland Department of Planning. *Tracking Residential Growth: Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) and Residential Single-Family Development in Maryland, 1990–2005*. Available online at http://www.mdp.state.md.us/pfa_773.html
- ²³ Sherling, M. et al. *Not So Smart: Land Consumption in Maryland After a Decade of 'Smart Growth*. Environment Maryland Research and Policy Center (2009).
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District. *Mattawoman Creek Watershed Management Plan* (2003), 32.
- ²⁶ Maryland Department of the Environment. *Total Maximum Daily Loads of Nitrogen and Phosphorus for Mattawoman Creek in Charles County and Prince George's County, Maryland* (2005).
- ²⁷ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District. *Mattawoman Creek Watershed Management Plan* (2003), 6.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ²⁹ Maryland Department of Planning, *Summary of County Agricultural Land Preservation Programs* (2009).
- ³⁰ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Letter to Charles County Government (11/19/2008).

Photo Credits

Aerial imagery provided by David Bick. All other photos appear courtesy of the Mattawoman Watershed Society.

Mount Vernon Viewshed analysis by Michael G. Clarke, AICP, George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate; map composed by Mattawoman Watershed Society.



Testimony of **Edward R. Fleming** on behalf of the **Walton Group of Companies**
to **Board of Charles County Commissioners**

Re: 2016 Comprehensive Plan

May 17, 2016

1) Introduction

- a) Edward R. Fleming – president of East Region, Walton Development & Management; Colonel (Retired), US Army, Corps of Engineers
- b) Walton Group of Companies - family owned land development and management company

2) Describe Washington Glen Property

- a) ~136 acres
- b) fronting on south side of Billingsley Road (4 lane arterial with a 16 inch public water line in the right of way) approximately 1.25 miles west of its intersection with Route 301
- c) in deferred development district since 2000
- d) in priority funding area since 2000
- e) in Tier II sewer designation area since 2014
- f) in Port Tobacco watershed
- g) Surrounding 1,160 Acre Area - less than 1/10th of 1,160 acres drains to the Mattawoman Creek Watershed

3) County Planning Staff Recommendation for 1,160 Acres (including Washington Glen)

- a) Rezone from Deferred Development District to Development District and designate as a Transfer of Development Rights receiving area (Note - TDR receivers pay to acquire development rights in exchange for preserving other County land specifically identified for preservation to serve a public purpose)
- b) Remain in Priority Funding Area
- c) Remain in Tier II
- d) Staff recognized that this area does not drain to the Mattawoman Creek, was next in line for development, and was aware of the school site

- 4) County Planning Commission Recommendation for 1,160 Acres Including Washington Glen
 - a) Downzone to Watershed Conservation District (a zone that does not exist)
 - b) Remove from Priority Funding Area (but later re-voted to put only the 46 acre school site back in)
 - c) Remove from Tier II and put in Tier IV for public water and sewer (Tier II proposes water and sewer, while Tier IV does not allow it)
 - d) Note that Planning Commission, unlike its Staff, did not know about the elementary school site location and future planned construction
- 5) Billingsley Road Elementary School Site
 - a) 46 acre tract purchased because located in Priority Funding Area
 - b) Washington Glen surrounds school site on 3 sides, with south side of Billingsley Road forming 4th boundary
 - c) Residential development of Washington Glen will create a neighborhood next to school from which children can walk and bike without crossing Billingsley Road (which contains 4 lanes and a median). Children in neighborhood next to school could also exercise and play on school's fields and outdoor equipment within sight and sound of their homes
 - d) Local neighborhood will not use up much of school's seating capacity, so vast majority of seats will remain for students from other areas (Ex - 3 houses per ac = appx 400 houses x 0.20 County elementary school student generation rate for single family detached homes = 80 students at full build out/sales/occupancy. That is 1/10th of capacity for 800 seat school)
 - e) Residential development in proximity to school will help pay for extension of public sewer to school. Otherwise, County and its citizens will have to pay the estimated several million dollars it will cost to just sewer the school. This is money that could otherwise be spent on upgrading the infrastructure and educational opportunities at other schools
- 6) Walton's Recommendation For Washington Glen and Remainder of 1,160 Acres Where Appropriate (same recommendation as made by County's independent, expert Planning Staff)
 - a) Place in Development District zone and designate as a TDR receiver
 - b) Remain in Priority Funding Area
 - c) Remain in Tier II



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BY HAND DELIVERY

May 17, 2016

County Commissioners of Charles County
200 Baltimore Street
La Plata, Maryland 20646

Re: Comprehensive Plan Update Testimony

Dear Commissioners:

I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of the Scott Law Group, LLC, regarding the proposed and pending Comprehensive Plan update. Both Steve Scott and I have over twenty-five (25) years of experience in land use, planning and zoning in Charles County. It is thus that we were astonished and dismayed at the Planning Commission's ill-informed suggestion that the 1,160 acres of land in the Priority Funding Area (the "**PFA**") south of Billingsley Road be designated as part of the Watershed Conservation District in the Comprehensive Plan.

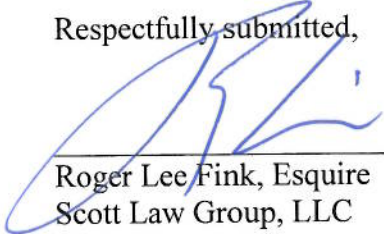
I use the term "suggestion" rather than the more appropriate term "decision" because of the absence of any meaningful analysis, discussion or transparent deliberation of the proposal prior to its adoption. I call the suggestion "ill-informed" because of the absence of information provided or presented to the Planning Commission in many aspects regarding that land south of Billingsley Road.

For example, there was no information about why that land was made a part of the County's Development District in the 1992 Comprehensive Rezoning of the County. There was no mention of the comprehensive sewer study conducted in 1993 and 1994, and adopted as a long term sewer plan, that the land being developed north of Billingsley Road and west of Middletown Road that could not gravity feed to the Piney Branch Interceptor and could only be supported by individual standalone sewer pump stations, would ultimately be serviced by a single sewer pump station constructed in the future south of Billingsley Road, thereby saving the County exorbitant maintenance costs. There was no discussion about how and why the County planned for and funded the public infrastructure for a dualized Billingsley Road with a 16" water main to serve the land south of Billingsley Road. There was no information provided about how

and why the County Commissioners determined in 1998 and 1999 to designate that land within the County's Priority Funding Area. There was no discussion about how a zoning mapping error in 2001, in direct contradiction to the Commissioners direction in 2000 that no PFA land be included in the newly created Deferred Development District, resulted in the PFA land south of Billingsley Road being inadvertently and erroneously down-zoned to RC(D). There was no discussion of how the proposal affects the County's 2014 Septic Tier II designation for that land. Although it was available at the time the proposal was made, there was no information provided to the Planning Commission that the Board of Education had just purchased a parcel of that PFA land for a future school site. Finally, and most perplexingly, the proposed Watershed Conservation District land use designation – a designation designed to protect and preserve the Mattawoman Watershed – makes no sense for land, 90% of which is not contained in the Mattawoman Watershed.

Accordingly, Scott Law Group, LLC respectfully requests that the County Commissioners deny the proposal, restore the erroneously removed Development District designation of the PFA land, and take such other and further action as the Commissioners deem necessary and proper in this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,



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cc: Stephen H. Scott, Esq. (via email)



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*C.E.O.
David Jenkins*

May 17, 2016

Charles County Board of County Commissioners
P.O Box 2150
200 Baltimore Avenue
La Plata, MD 20646

Re: Draft April 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan Update

Dear County Commissioners:

We appreciate both your and the Planning Commission's efforts during this long Comprehensive Plan update process.

The Southern Maryland Association of REALTORS® previously submitted review comments on October 5, 2015 to the Planning Commission after our review of the October 2015 version.

We respectfully submit the following comments on the draft April 2016 comprehensive plan version for your review and consideration. These are provided in comparison to SMAR's adopted Public Policy Statements.

We did have the opportunity to watch and then review the material presented by Steve Ball, Planning Director at your May 10, 2016 Comprehensive Plan Briefing and understand that there will be follow up work sessions.

To assist in the review of this latest draft, it would have been helpful to have a table, matrix or marked document highlighting the changes from the October 2015 version.

The material presented by Steve Ball, Planning Director at your May 10, 2016 Briefing did help with our review.

We support the following items from the list of 25 significant changes to the 2016 draft plan:

#1 – Supports light rail transit and redevelopment corridor

#2 – Economic development chapter was updated. Supports the Airport Land Use Study and most recommendations

#5 – Supports a variety of housing types and price ranges. Requires new Code changes for affordability housing



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- #11 Designates a new TDR receiving area – Southern County*
- #14 – Incorporates new policies and maps for military influence areas*
- #17 – Matches La Plata's growth boundaries*
- #18 – Promotes workforce housing in Transit Oriented Developments*
- #25 – Maintains employment and commercial land uses and opportunities*

The current version of the update provides tables, data and inventory of existing conditions. Perhaps using appropriate GIS techniques, this information can be re-published in graphic formats to instead provide visual maps of existing conditions and future scenarios. Charles County has a fairly robust GIS system that could be partnered with the Maryland Department of Planning and other state agencies for this purpose.

Chapter 1 Framework

General comment:

While the State Planning goals are laudable, they are generalized goals and not all necessarily appropriate for all communities - one size does not fit all. This current draft, after its many revisions, must in the adequately reflect the needs, desires and evolving changes of Charles County to the benefit of everyone in the community.

While there may be some staff coordination with La Plata and Indian Head, additional engagement and leadership is needed for the respective reinvestment efforts of these important municipalities.

Chapter 2 Background

The growth policies in the current 2006 comprehensive plan have worked, as noted in your May 10 briefing, including *"The Planning Commission did not support policies which limit the issuance of building permits."* This includes the targeted growth rate, as well as population and housing growth and building permits and forested acres (See Chapter 11 Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Page 11-5). Remaining consistent with these successful policies is necessary for the long-term growth that is both managed and predictable. (Page 2-2.

Yet we are concerned that a preponderance of the revised goals and objectives of the proposed draft fail to find a sustainable balance between residential development, economic development and environmental protection. Language throughout the plan should be carefully reviewed and where



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necessary rewritten to ensure these goals and objectives are balanced, sustainable, and do not conflict with one another creating mutually exclusive planning scenarios.

The plan also mentions existing projects in the pipeline that are expected to absorb new growth. One project in particular is Heritage Green, a mixed use community project annexed by the Town of La Plata over 20 years ago which has, to date, failed to move forward. Pipeline projects such as this one should be re-examined to determine whether the assumption they will absorb future growth remains valid. (Page 2-6)

In item #8, (Page 3-4) It is recommended that the plan update account for the total amount of protected County acreage, including but not limited to Federal lands, protected environmentally sensitive lands, and lands under forest or agricultural preservation easements and also state what percent of total County acreage this represents. We believe this clarification will more clearly demonstrate that County land preservation and growth policies under the current plan are successful and should continue in the update.

Page 3-5 Development Districts – Support underlining concept of the Development District – *“map in advance those areas where 75% of the County’s residential growth will occur and the County will provide infrastructure to support growth, including water and sewer, schools and roads.”*

Page 3-6 discussion of Employment and Industrial Districts, we strong recommend that any future study to assess the County’s inventory of employment/commercial land be coordinated with the County’s proposed 5 Year Economic Development Strategic Plan, scheduled for Commissioner review on May 24, 2016. The importance of finding the right balance of commercial/industrial to residential tax base cannot be emphasized enough and should be a stated goal in both the Land Use and Economic Development elements of the comprehensive plan update, as noted in the May 10 Commissioner briefing stated *“Provide for job opportunities, diversifies the tax base”*.

Additional comments are found on Page 6 of this letter, Chapter 7, Economic Development.

Page 3-7 – Support the concept of *Commercial and Industrial Floating Zone*.

Page 3-8 Mixed Use District -it is recommended to stress the importance of this district - to support Smart Growth goals, diversity in housing choices, guide infrastructure investments and act as an economic development tool for community and business reinvestment. SMAR ‘s long held public policy which supports the notion that more Southern Maryland residents should have the opportunity to “live where you work” is critically important in Charles County where it is experiencing

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a declining population of millennials in the 25-34-year-old demographic. An emphasis in the plan on the importance of using the Mixed Use District to keep and attract more millennials here is highly recommended.

Figure 3-14, showing Naval Support Facility, Indian Head, a product from the Indian Head Joint Land Use Study, - is somewhat misleading as the map's scale and legend do not recognize the existing Maryland Airport. This omission seems inconsistent with the Employment and Industrial Districts goals found on page 3-6:

"Employment and industrial area are located in several key locations: in and around the established industrial parks at White Plains and Demarr Road; adjacent to the commercial core in Waldorf; on Billingsley Road near MD 5; in Morgantown; in Hughesville; and around the Maryland Airport."

We support the

Page 3-8 – Support the Redevelopment District and its importance to Waldorf, TOD and mixed use development opportunities.

It is again troubling that in the discussion of growth rate on page 3-19, consistency with the growth rate stated in the current 2006 plan is couched in misleading terms, *"While Charles County's growth rate has remained within its objective, during the Comprehensive Plan process several participants raised the issue of the County's growth rate. Some participants stated that the rate was too high, while others states that the rate has slowed significantly since the economic recession began in 2007."* Yet, at the May 10 Commissioner briefing the following was clearly stated *"The Planning Commission did not support polices policies which limit the issuance of building permits."* We hope the Commissioners support this recommendation.

Page 3-24 – Policies: Support the following: 3.1. 3.2

Page 3-25 Actions: Support items # 1, 2, 3, but urge the Commissioners to maintain consistency with other policies when reviewing the development regulations (zoning, subdivision and related ordinances for the good of the County. The Department of Planning and Growth Management reported to the Planning Commission on various growth management options in February 2012 and there was interest in considering a mechanism similar to the one used by St. Mary's County (see below under Actions) Emphasis added. This is not to suggest that the County not review and, where necessary, revise its goals, objectives and policies, but it is troubling to mask factual information and data that demonstrates the County's growth policies are working and make significant policy changes solely on the basis of *"several participants" in a charrette*. The comprehensive plan update must be a



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document that continues to acknowledge the County's successful growth management policies to the benefit of all of Charles County.

Support Action Item 8 - *Implement the recommendations from the Airport Land Use Study completed in 2015*". This should also be coordinated with the EDC's 5 Year Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Chapter 4 - Water Resources

Page 4-7, 4.2 Scenarios, states the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Recommended Scenario will use 5% more rural land. We wonder what the basis is for making this assumption and request documentation and clarity or a revision to this statement.

Page 4-33, the text above Table 4-8 provides total impervious surface amounts by percent, but following paragraph uses acres of impervious surface. We recommend using both in the text to be consistent with the information provided Table 4-8.

Page 4-34 the text in the paragraph above Table 4-9 is confusing and fails to fully explain Table 4-9. Also, sources and/or the formula to develop the results for each scenario should be provided.

Chapter 5 - Natural Resources Protection

Page 5-1 Goals and Objectives:

5-2 - *"Protect 50 percent of Charles County as open space."* What is the current percentage of open space percent in Charles County? If this goal has already been met, the plan should state this.

5-7 – The awareness of natural resource protection should be broadened to include Smart Growth principles and techniques and how they contribute to the protection of natural resources.

In general, this Chapter has plethora of facts and figures. We recommend the addition of charts or tables and GIS information/graphics showing the acres of all lands and resources discussed in this chapter, similar to Table 5-1, using the appropriate data and sources.

Chapter 6 Energy Conservation



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Laudatory goal and objectives, but there should be further analysis of the costs and impact on real estate and construction industries when implementing energy standards.

Chapter 7- Economic Development

We agree with the goal and objectives, specifically 4.2, 4.3, 4.7, 4.10. 4.11

We believe it is vital for the County to conduct an economic study to identify the percentage of commercial/industrial tax base necessary to offset the cost of government services to residential property and diversity the County's economic base. Reaching this percentage should be a goal in this chapter along with incremental increases noted as objectives over time in order to measure performance.

Economic development must be an integral part of the County's comprehensive plan and as coordinated and holistic process. This process should include the integration into the Economic Development Department's proposed 5-year Economic Development Strategy to be presented to the Commissioners on May 24. We strongly recommend that language be inserted into this draft to acknowledge this fact and revise this chapter incorporating the elements, goals, objectives and recommendations of the 5 Year strategic plan.

Page 7-4 We applaud the highlighting of Maryland Airport that *"is an economic development asset that the County has yet to fully tap"*. However, there is little follow up in the Policies and Actions portion of this chapter, starting on Page 7-11. There should also be coordination with the Action Item 8, as stated in Chapter 3 Land Use (Page 3-25) *"Implement the recommendations from the Airport Land Use Study completed in 2015"*.

Tourism seems to have taken a more prominent role in the County's economic development, supported by the following statement (Page 7-6) *"During the public participation process of updating the Comprehensive Plan, heritage tourism, eco-tourism emerged as a high priority strategy to promote tourism."* Two studies are then referenced, a 2012 study documenting what outdoor recreation generates in consumer spending and jobs in Maryland regarding documenting economic impact and visitor generation in State Parks in Southern Maryland. This revised plan did provide documentation of these reports, (Page 7-6). However, it should be noted that tourism is one of many components of economic development.



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Chapter 8 Transportation

The recently approved FY 17 CIP under Transportation, has Line Item 119, Charles County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (total 5 year cost \$1.9 million). What is this item and its purpose, given this Transportation Chapter in draft April 2016 Comprehensive Plan?

Page 8-1 Goals and Objectives - We were concerned that prior actions by the County Commissioners were inconsistent with some of the goals in this Chapter. However, with the May 3, 2016 approval of

the FY CIP, there is more consistency with Goals 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 by the restoration of \$2,400,000 for Western Parkway Phase III.

Goal 8.9 - funds were restored for WURC Implementation Studies.

Page 8-2 - Issues and Policy Considerations. We note the first bullet states in part, "*.... both local and through traffic is traveling on few roads that run east-west through the area.*" This emphasizes the need to keep cross-county connector from Middletown Road east to MD 210 in this plan. The dominant purpose of local government is to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens and

transportation options. County residents deserve a safe and modern east-west connector road as a means to help fulfill this purpose.

We have the following comments for Table 8-5 Road Improvements:

C-17 -Page 8-20, Radio Station Road – While designated a Short Term project, Ped/Bike Route should also be identified. Sidewalks, and pedestrian crossings are needed along this road, given cluster of schools and other public facilities, e.g., La Plata High School, Mary Matula Elementary, BOE Central Office, Laurel Springs Regional Park, CSM Driver/Transportation Center, FB Gwynn Education Center, and Center for Children. Sidewalks or trails can then connect to the existing trail adjacent to MD 488/Agricopia to the south and the Rosewick Road/St. Charles Parkway to the north. Support the its designation as Short Term, given the need identified above. Refer to Figure 8.5 Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes.

- LP-1 Page 8-24 - This is a Town of La Plata project and designated as mid-term. This is questionable because a majority of the road is within the Heritage Green mixed use development, annexed into La Plata over 20 years ago. The developer was to be responsible for construction of a significant portion



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of this within their site. The County should investigate with the Town of La Plata the future viability of this project.

Page 8-33 bottom paragraph which states, *"To strategically plan the local infrastructure investment and provide necessary incentives for re-development, the County completed a comprehensive evaluation of local transportation improvements through the Waldorf Urban Transportation*

Improvement Plan." The recent adoption of FY 17 CIP (May 3, 2016), reinforces the importance of the Comprehensive Plan and its implementation through the County's CIP.

Page 8-35 Air Transportation - The importance of Maryland Airport cannot be over emphasized for both transportation and economic development reasons and urge additional emphasis for implementation by the County through implementation of policies, CIP and Economic Development Department. Please refer to previous comments in Chapter 3 Land Use and Chapter 7 Economic Development.

Chapter 9 Community Facilities and Services

Supportive of stated Goals & Objections.

Page 9-12 – Agree and urge consistency with County policies and the Comp Plan as stated: *"The Comprehensive Plan establishes framework within which functional plans.... Are formulated. Such recommendations form the basis for projects in the annual Capital Budget and Capital Improvement Program."*

Page 9-13 - Exactions and impact fees – The Plan recommends that *"this needs to be further studied and is currently funded for FY 18 in the CIP"*. While these help contribute the provision of adequate public facilities, they need to be reasonable, fair, and reviewed annually. Further, there must be a rational and documented nexus to the impacts created by development and funds provided by development expended in a timely manner for their intended purpose.

Page 9-15 Actions:

9-1 Include CSM as a partner in workforce training and development.



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9-6 – The approved FY 17 CIP includes funding for the La Plata Library relocation. There is a need for coordination with the Town of La Plata as the move forward with their downtown reinvestment effort.

9-9 - While these help contribute the provision of adequate public facilities, they need to be reasonable, fair, and reviewed annually. Further, there must be a rational and documented nexus to the impacts created by development and funds provided by development expended in a timely manner for their intended purpose.

Chapter 10 Community Development

In general, we believe this chapter is really about creating sense of place and should be coordinated with Chapter 7, Economic Development and their Economic Development Strategy.

SMAR can be used as a resource and partner working with the County's Community Services Department to help achieve its goals and objectives for diverse, affordable housing, and home buying education. We have access through NAR to Housing, Smart Growth and other education grants, data, research and information. Language in the comprehensive plan that encourages this partnership will be of tremendous benefit to current and future County residents and home buyers.

Page 10-2 Goals and Objectives:

10.4, 10.5- These goals/objectives should include and recognize the link to the housing continuum that housing needs change during one's life. Implementation techniques should be investigated.

10.6 – We are concerned that current environmental regulations and restrictions prevent instead, rather than promote public access to the waterfront. Little action has been taken to meet this goal under the current plan. Perhaps an update of the 1999 Waterfront Development Opportunities study, referenced on Page 10-22 is needed. We also note that the approved FY 17 CIP includes Water Front Acquisition funds. Prior to new acquisition, the availability and ease of public access should be determined.

Page 10-3 Development Districts - These ideas are fundamental Smart Growth principles. We recommend greater public education and outreach to raise awareness and build a consensus of support for this type of development so as to minimize opposition based on fear of the unknown.



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Page 10-4 – Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor (WURC). The importance of this project is again emphasized for its importance for economic development, transportation (Transit Oriented Development), housing diversity and community reinvestment.

Page 10-6 – Hughesville – The County should consider the full range of tools including Form Based Codes, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), development districts and other techniques for this and other reinvestment areas (including WURC). These tools, as well as developer contributions, can and should be used as necessary and appropriate to each unique community.

Page 10-22 Housing - SMAR can be used as a resource and partner working with the County's Community Services Department to help achieve its goals and objectives for diverse, affordable housing, and home buying education. We have access through NAR to Housing, Smart Growth and other education grants, data, research and information. Language in the comprehensive plan that encourages this partnership will be of tremendous benefit to current and future County residents and home buyers.

Page 10-32 Housing Policies and Actions – Fully support the Housing Policies as listed. 10.3 through 10.8. These are all consistent with SMAR's 2015 Home Ownership Public Policy Statements.

Chapter 11 Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries

We support the goals and objectives of this new chapter. Preservation of these natural resources are important assets that add to the County's economy, culture and sense of place.

Page 11-5 – Forestry, Timberland – It should be emphasized that *"Charles County has been, and currently remains the third most forested county by acres in Maryland."* This again indicates that the County's growth policies and growth rates have and are working. Refer to Page 5 of this letter and our comments on Chapter 3 Land Use that apply here as well.

Page 11-7 – Action 1 – "create a county purchase of development rights program using bond funding, a **county transfer tax** (emphasis added) and/or additional sources to insure a dedicated funding source for the program." *Using a county transfer tax* "is at odds and inconsistent with the stated purpose of balancing the FY 16 budget when the real estate transfer tax was passed in July 2016 and now will be forwarded to the General Fund, per approval of the approved FY 17 budget.



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Page 11-7 – Action 3- Support revision to the TDR program not only to preserve agricultural and forested land, but also to provide redevelopment/reinvestment in the Priority Funding Area and the WURC, consistent with Chapter 3 Land Use Goals and Objectives.

Appendix F: Telecommunications and Broadband

Page 1 - Agree and support *"This report was prepared at the request of the County Commissioners to elevate this topic as part of the Comprehensive Plan.* We would add that broadband is an economic development and infrastructure necessity, the same a water, sewer and electricity. We further urge extension of broadband to Indian Head, Maryland Airport and other areas in the County a shown on Figure 4 Existing and Proposed Fiber Routes, 2011.

Although these comments are lengthy, we trust the County Commissioners will give them serious review and consideration during the suggested work sessions. We are committed to working with the County and welcome the opportunity to contribute our background, knowledge and expertise toward the continued health and well-being of Charles County.

Attachments:

1. SMAR Public Policy Statements
2. *On Common Ground, Summer 2016*
3. April 2016 Housing Statistics – Charles County highlighted

Sincerely yours,

Steve Paul
President